index grating may be etched in the glass optical fiber portion of the cable. Once the grating is etched, the cable may be removed by reversing the method.

Amendments to the Abstract are set forth in bracket and underline format in Exhibit A, attached herewith.

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are currently pending in this application.

The Office Action objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure as containing more than 150 words; rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schroeder, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 4,046,298); rejected claims 8-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hill et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,216,739) in view of Schroeder, Jr.; and rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Novack et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,886) in view of Schroeder, Jr.

By this Amendment, Applicants have amended the Abstract to make it less than 150 words. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request the reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract of the Disclosure. Applicants respectfully traverse the Section 102(b) rejection of claims 1-7, and the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 8-15, for the following reasons.

With regard to the Section 102(b) rejection, Schroeder, Jr., as shown in Fig. 4 (reproduced below), disclose a method and apparatus for stripping optical fiber ribbons. The apparatus includes a rotatably mounted shaft 23 that extends through a support arm and is fixedly connected to a cylindrical stripping wheel 24. A knob 25 is fixedly attached to the shaft 23, and a permanent stop pin 26 projects horizontally from the side of the stripping wheel 24. A U-

shaped wheel clamp 29 is affixed to the stripping wheel 24. In operation, the knob 25 is rotated in a counter-clockwise direction, as viewed in Fig. 4, until the permanent stop pin 26 contacts the support arm 22. The micrometer assembly 70 is then rotated to move the first end 66 away from cylindrical stripping wheel 24 (as shown in phantom). The optical fiber ribbon 10b is then clamped firmly with the wheel clamp 29 and releasably clamped with external clamp 52. The cutting blade 73 is lowered toward the stripping wheel 24 until the blade 73 pierces the coating of the ribbon 10b. The cylindrical stripping wheel 24 is then rotated clockwise to remove the upper portion of the protective coating 12, as fibers are simultaneously bent to conform to the periphery of the stripping wheel 24.

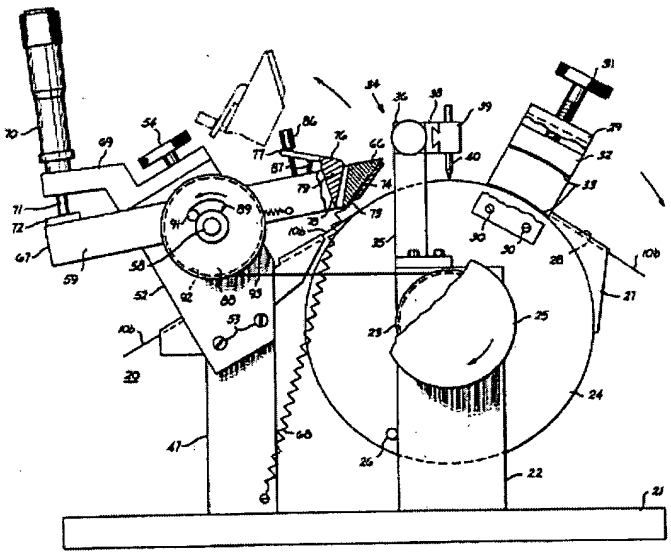

FIG. 4

Schroeder, Jr. does not disclose or suggest that the cylindrical stripping wheel 24 creates a gravity-assisted moment arm to uniformly and repeatably tension and position the ribbon 10b between wheel clamp 29 and external clamp 52. In fact, the reference teaches that the stripping wheel 24 must be "rotated" clockwise, via knob 25, to strip the protective coating of ribbon 10b and score and break the optical fibers 11-11. (See col. 5, lines 24-42). The reference further discloses that the knob 25 (and hence the stripping wheel 24) must be "rotated" in a counter-

clockwise direction until the permanent stop pin 26 contacts the support arm. Thus, stripping wheel 24 does not rotate under its own weight, and must be manually rotated by the user of the apparatus (there would be no need for knob 25 if stripping wheel 24 were not manually rotated). Thus, the stripping wheel 24 of Schroeder, Jr. cannot create a gravity-assisted moment arm. The disclosure of the permanent stop pin 26 further shows this. If stripping wheel 24 were to rotate through its own weight then it must rotate ***counter-clockwise*** (which does not place ribbon 10b in tension) until stop pin 26 engages support arm 22, otherwise stop pin 26 would not function correctly. That is, assuming stripping wheel 24 rotated through its own weight in a clockwise direction, then it would rotate away from stop pin 26 when it was released, making it impossible to load the ribbon 10b in wheel clamp 29.

The disclosure of Schroeder, Jr. completely contradicts the Office Action's assertion that the reference inherently teaches rotation of the stripping wheel 24 due to its own weight because the combined weight of the second support components (31, 29, and 32) would inherently pull the optical fiber in a clockwise direction. Rather, Schroeder, Jr. discloses manual rotation of stripping wheel 24, via knob 25, and fails to disclose the weights, dimensions, etc. of stripping wheel 24 or second support components (31, 29, and 32).

In contrast, the present invention recited, for example, in claim 1, and claims 2-7, at least by virtue of dependence, comprises a combination of elements, including creating a gravity-assisted moment arm with a second support to uniformly and repeatably tension and position the fiber optic cable between first and second supports.

Schroeder, Jr. fails to disclose the combination of elements recited in claims 1-7. As discussed above, the reference fails to disclose or suggest that the cylindrical stripping wheel 24 creates a gravity-assisted moment arm to uniformly and repeatably tension and position the

ribbon 10b between wheel clamp 29 and external clamp 52. Rather, the reference teaches that the stripping wheel 24 must be "rotated" clockwise, via knob 25, to strip the protective coating of ribbon 10b and must be "rotated" in a counter-clockwise direction, via knob 25, until the permanent stop pin 26 contacts the support arm. The stripping wheel 24 must be manually rotated (otherwise knob 25 would not be needed) and does not rotate under its own weight. Thus, the stripping wheel 24 cannot create a gravity-assisted moment arm. Even assuming, *in arguendo*, stripping wheel 24 were to rotate through its own weight, then it must rotate counter-clockwise, creating slack and not tension in ribbon 10b, until stop pin 26 engages support arm 22, otherwise stop pin 26 would not function correctly.

With regard to the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 8-14, the Office Action relied upon Schroeder, Jr. and Hill for the disclosure of these claims, but admitted that Hill fails to "teach the use of a gravity assisted moment arm for creating tension in the optical fibers." The present invention recited in claim 8, and claims 9-14, at least by virtue of dependence, comprises a combination of elements, including creating a gravity-assisted moment arm with a second support to uniformly and repeatably tension and position the fiber optic cable between first and second supports. As shown above, Schroeder, Jr. fails to disclose or suggest the use of a gravity-assisted moment arm for creating tension in the optical fibers. Therefore, even assuming Hill and Schroeder, Jr. are properly combinable, such combination fails to disclose the combination of elements recited in claims 8-14.

With regard to the Section 103(a) rejection of claim 15, the Office Action relied upon Schroeder, Jr. and Novack et al. for the disclosure of these claims, but admitted that Novack et al. fails to "teach the use of a gravity assisted moment arm for creating tension in the optical fibers." Claim 15 comprises a combination of elements, including creating a gravity-assisted

moment arm with a second support to uniformly tension the fiber optic cable between first and second supports. Therefore, even assuming Novack et al. and Schroeder, Jr. are properly combinable, such combination fails to disclose the combination of elements recited in claim 15.

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-15 are allowable over Schroeder, Jr., Hill, and Novack et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request the reconsideration and withdrawal of the Section 102(b) rejection of claims 1-7, and the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 8-15. In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0308. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 20, 2002

By:_____

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EXHIBIT A – Amendments to Abstract of Serial No. 09/844,827

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract of the Disclosure, as follows:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for tensioning and positioning a fiber optic cable includes providing and securing a first portion of the fiber optic cable in a first support[. The first portion of the fiber optic cable is secured to the first support] with a first clamp [attached to the first support]. A second portion of the fiber optic cable is then provided in a second support, and secured thereto with a second clamp [attached to the second support]. A cam contacting the second support is then rotated, thereby rotating the second support due to its weight and the weight of the second clamp. The rotation of the second support creates a gravity-assisted moment arm that uniformly and repeatably tensions and positions the fiber optic cable. After the fiber optic cable is uniformly tensioned and positioned, [a laser may be applied to the cable to etch] a refractive-index grating may be etched in the glass optical fiber portion of the cable. Once the grating is etched, the cable may be removed by reversing the method.[Another fiber optic cable may be inserted in the first and second supports, and the process may then be repeated.]